



Where's the toy? San Francisco's new law will bar fast-food restaurants from including toys in kids' meals deemed too unhealthy. (David Paul Morris / Getty Images)

Is This Meal Still Happy?

New law bans the selling of toys with unhealthy kids' meals in San Francisco

By [Zach Jones](#) | November 12, 2010



Lawmakers say fast-food chains lure kids into unhealthy eating with toys. (NewsCom)

Earlier this week, San Francisco, California, passed a law that leaves fast-food sellers with two choices: Remove the toys from their kids' meals, or make the meals healthier.

City lawmakers say that fast-food restaurants are luring kids into bad eating habits by advertising toys that are available only with their unhealthy food.

What counts as unhealthy? The new law limits the amounts of salt, calories, and fat in meals that include toys, and requires that either half a cup of fruit or three fourths of a cup of vegetables be included for the meal to be considered healthy.

French fries do count as a vegetable, but they have so much salt that one serving will push any meal over the limit.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Last week, Yale University released a study that supports the reasons behind San Francisco's law. Researchers studied kids' meals from the 50 largest fast-food restaurant chains in the U.S. They found that out of 3,039 possible meal combinations, only 15 met nutrition standards.

But fast-food companies say they're doing everything they can to provide healthy and tasty food to families. Last year, McDonald's sold more than 100 million Happy Meals that included apple slices rather than french fries and about 120 million liters of low-fat milk.

Companies like McDonald's argue that their toys are an important part of the fun of eating kids' meals, and that even unhealthy foods can be a special treat for a young person who has a well-balanced diet. They say restaurants now offer more healthy options for kids than ever before.

Restaurants have one year to decide whether to toss the toys or boost nutrition: San Francisco's ban is set to go into effect in December 2011.

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